may seriously affect them. Still, not as jewels in a casket do we cherish and defend the Bible and its truths; rather, as mighty moral forces, that work in human lives and systems for infinite betterment. And it is that we too may work, have faith to work amid sore discouragements. We can never dispute in place of work, but only when needful to clear a passage to our work. Our ambition is to be accounted builders — if we must, builders of the Nehemiah type, sword in hand; but still builders only, in the great architectures of the kingdom of our Lord.

ARTICLE II.

THE CONCEPTION ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

BY PROF. E. BENJ. ANDREWS, BROWN UNIVERSITY.

MATTHEW xvi. 18 is, manywise, an interesting scripture: "And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." But the interest has usually not been fixed upon that limb of the verse which most deserves it. The relation of Peter to the church is, indeed, a fit subject for study; but still more so is Christ's conception of the church itself. This is the earliest passage containing that conception; and what is still worthier to be noticed, it presents it to us directly from Christ. It will not end, but will more than begin, the task which this paper proposes, if we can ascertain with a measure of exactness what thought confronted Christ's mind corresponding to the word "church" in this address to Peter.

It is an instant suggestion to proceed at once to study the word ἐκκλησία. But it is almost certain that Christ did not speak these words to Peter in Greek. Renan thinks that he always used Aramaic, never uttering a single sentence in another tongue. This is, perhaps, going too far. However, considering, among other things, Christ's social condition,

Digitized by Google

the facts that he taught chiefly the common people, and so taught as to make them hear him gladly, that the then needs of the synagogue service and of private scriptural study in Palestine had called forth Aramaic versions of most of the Old Testament books, that the Gospel of the Hebrews, a very old if not the oldest of the Gospels, was written in Aramaic, and that a considerable party in the church of Jerusalem used Aramaic until the time of Hadrian, we cannot doubt that at least a dialogue between Christ and his chief apostle would be in this their mother tongue.[1]

What, then, was that Aramaic word of Christ's which our Greek Matthew translates by ἐκκλησία? Beyond doubt it was קהל. קהל was one of those numerous Hebrew words which had significance enough in relation to Israelitish thought and life to be retained in the vernacular after the Captivity.[2] It is Aramaic, therefore, as truly as it is Hebrew. It occurs with exceeding frequency in all the Targums, and in them all is the regular Aramaic word whereby to effect the transfer of קהל from Hebrew. In Onkelos, embracing the Pentateuch, that section of the Old Testament where קהל most often appears, the Aramaic word renders its Hebrew predecessor twenty-eight times out of thirty-two, or in just eighty-five hundredths of all the cases. In the Palestinian Targums this transfer occurs, to be sure, only in sixty-two hundredths of the instances; but this lower proportion is due almost wholly to careless paraphrasing in Ezekiel, where the Targum has contracted special confusion from the Septuagint. If we omit this prophet, קהל renders קהל in the Palestinian Targum

[1] Cf. Etheridge: The Targums on the Pentateuch, i. 4; Bleek, Introd. to New Test., i. 54, thinks that Christ addressed Pilate, at least, in Greek; cf. Keim, Jesus of Nazara, ii. 152 sq.; Josephus, Antiq. xx. 11. 2; Renan, Apostles (N.Y., 1867), p. 84; Gibbon, Decline and Fall, i. 514; Eusebius, Hist. Eccl. iv. 5. The best evidence that Christ ordinarily used Aramaic is that he used it on the cross, Matt. xxvii. 46.

[2] It passed into the Neo-Hebrew of the Mischna, Vitringa: De Synag. Vetere, 87, and persists to-day in the Hebrew of Jewish Prayer-books. See The Festival Prayers according to the Ritual of the German and Polish Jews, London, 1857, wherein, in all responsive services, קהל means "congregation:" חזן, "reader" or "minister."

Digitized by Google

almost precisely as often as in Onkelos, viz. in seventy-nine hundredths of all cases. Ezekiel again excepted, for the reason just now indicated, whenever any Targum really translates the Hebrew קהל, it does this through the Aramaic word כנישתא, which is so synonymous with the Aramaic קהל as to show that this latter might have been employed instead, yet, at the same time, so much less definite and dignified as to appear a trifle awkward in its attempt to fill the place of the Hebrew קהל. The cause of this needless and misleading resort to כנישתא is to be found in the influence of the Septuagint, whose example the Targums everywhere, even in Ezekiel, quite slavishly follow in departing from their usual rendering for קהל.[1] There is little risk in saying that, but for the Septuagint, the Targums would always transfer קהל instead of translating it; an inference borne out by the facts that they, after all, manifest some reluctance to follow the Septuagint in lapsing from the standard rendering, and that this lapse occurs least frequently in Onkelos, the most scholarly and independent of all the Targums.[2]

Now these Targums were the everyday Scriptures of Palestine during our Lord's life.[3] From a considerable time before the restoration under Ezra the Hebrew language as it exists in the Bible had ceased to be the vernacular of the Jewish people. Old Hebrew was still read in the synagogue, but the common people needed a translation of the holy writings into their own speech. At first, doubtless, the oral paraphrases of synagogue interpreters were sufficient; and so far as law and prophets were concerned, i.e. those portions of the Old Testament regularly read in the synagogues, oral translations may have sufficed for long. However, even the law was read through in the synagogue only once a year; earlier, but once in three years;[4] and that zeal for their religion shown by the

[1] The Peschito shows the same influence; see Bleek, Einl. ins A. T. (4th ed.), 601, 603.

[2] Ibid., p. 608. It, too, probably originated in Palestine, as well as Jonathan.

[3] Zunz, Gottesdienstliche Vorträge der Juden, S. 7.

[4] Robertson Smith, O. T. in the Jewish Church, pp. 96, 106. The prophets were regarded as of secondary importance, and portions of them omitted.

Digitized by Google

Jews of the NewTestament period can hardly have been engendered without a more intimate knowledge of the Scriptures than the synagogue could give.[1] Besides, the hagiographa were well known without being read in the synagogue at all.[2] Translations, therefore, whether made privately, or officially for the synagogue service, must early have taken a written form and become considerably abundant among the people. The Talmud refers to written paraphrases of Job, Esther, and the Psalms in such wise as to show that these books must have existed in this form by or before the birth of Christ.[3] Etheridge, following Zunz, argues hence to the still earlier existence of Targums on the law and prophets. Bleek thinks that written translations must have been first supplied for the hagiographa. But there can be no doubt that the substance of the now extant Targums, whether written so early or not, was well known in the oldest Christian days. An incidental confirmation of this may be mentioned in passing. Matthew names a certain martyr Zacharias as "son of Barachias," yet in such connection as almost to prove that he means the "son of Jehoiada" spoken of in Second Chronicles. Exactly the same confusion occurs in the Palestinian Targum.[4]

Peter, then, heard Aramaic from the lips of Christ; Christ was familiar with the Targums; the Targums retain קהל as their standard rendering of that word in the Hebrew Old Testament. If we add now that the Greek ἐκκλησία is, for the Septuagint, as truly and steadfastly the correlate of the Hebrew קהל as the Aramaic קהל is for the Targums, and that ἐκκλησία had propagated itself with its Old Testament mean-

[1] Zeal, cf. Philo, De Leg. ad Caium, and Josephus, Antiq. xviii. 3. 1; xix. 6. 3; Bel. Jud. ii. 9. 2, 3.

[2] Until a considerably late period, Robertson Smith, op. cit., 160, 410. They are very often quoted in the N.T. Christ upon the cross quotes from Ps. xxii., in Aramaic, Matt. xxvii. 46.

[3] For the Talmudic passages, see Bleek, Einl. ins A. T., S. 606. By Jerome's time, even Tobit and Judith existed in Aramaic.

[4] Matt. xxiii. 35; 2 Chron. xxiv. 20; Targ. Jon., Lam. ii. 20. For still another, Zachariah, son of Baruch, killed in the temple, see Josephus, Bell. Jud. iv. 5. 4; but this was thirty-four years after Christ.

Digitized by Google

ings in Judaistic Greek till Christ's time,[1] the evidence seems pretty complete that Christ's word to Peter was קחל.

But perhaps the last two points need a paragraph or two of amplification. The word ἐκκλησία in the Septuagint is employed to translate קחל in sixty-three hundredths of all the passages where the latter word occurs. Had the translators not proceeded in a wholly arbitrary manner in abandoning ἐκκλησία in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, this proportion would be very largely increased. In these books קחל becomes Greek in the too indefinite word συναγωγή, although invariably bearing that central, normal, Old Testament meaning which elsewhere the Septuagint so properly seeks to bring out in the word ἐκκλησία. The same unfortunate rendering of קחל by συναγωγή occurs in a few other places. In spite of this, however, it is still clear that the Septuagint's standard word for קחל is ἐκκλησία, and not συναγωγή. In the first four places where קחל occurs in the Old Testament, it is confessedly used with such indefiniteness that συναγωγή is nearly as correct a rendering as ἐκκλησία. The desire to be uniform might easily lead a person, especially if he were translating orally and offhand,[2] to carry his first chosen Greek word too far. With Deuteronomy, which may well have been less closely attached to the rest of the Pentateuch then than now, the error is corrected; and from this point on, however lawlessly the various translators handle other words, except in Ezekiel and a few more passages where there is tangible reason for a change, they each time turn קחל into ἐκκλησία. In the latest books of all, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles,[3] קחל occurs forty-three times, and is rendered

[1] See Psalter of Solomon, x. 7. For this sense of ἐκκλησία, cf. Ps. cvi. 32; cvii. 32; cxlix. 1; Ezek. xxxii. 2; Acts vii. 38; Heb. ii. 12. For the age of this Psalm and of the Psalter at large, see ii. 30, also Fritzsche, Liber Apoc., V.T. p. xxv., Wellhausen, Pharisäer u. Sadducäer, 139, 155, Kleinert, Einl. zum A. T., 87. 88. The Beilage which Wellhausen, at the end of his Phar. u. Sadd., devotes to this Psalter offers a most excellent discussion, commentary, and translation.

[2] The mode, probably, in which the basis of the LXX translation arose, Bleek, Einl. ins A. T., 4te Aufl. 575.

[3] For the age of these books, see Schultz, Alttestamentliche Theologie, 2te Aufl. 759.

Digitized by Google

only twice otherwise than by ἐκκλησία. In one even of these passages, ἐκκλησία merely retires into its verb, ἐκκλησιάζειν. Doubtless, in the main, the Septuagint version is most accurate in the Pentateuch. This is because the knowledge of Hebrew was less abundant and definite when the later books were translated.[1] But the interpreters were Jews, to whom so important a conception as קהל could never become indefinite; and since the later translators certainly had the best opportunity to excel in Greek, their elect rendering of קהל must be taken as the norm.

The plentiful presence of ἐκκλησία in Chronicles bids us to be on the watch for the same word in the Apocrypha. We are not disappointed. In Judith it occurs four times; in 1 Maccabees five times; in Siracides twelve times,[2] the range of meaning or meanings being here substantially identical with that which the word has in the canonical Old Testament. This apocryphal ἐκκλησία is especially instructive. The three books just named were all composed either in Hebrew or in Aramaic, and the analogy of Septuagint usage elsewhere makes it as good as certain that ἐκκλησία stands in our Greek copies of them as a translation for קהל. These books, too, bring us near to New Testament times, and it is well known that both the vocabulary and the idiom of the Greek Apocrypha reappear in the New Testament to a very noteworthy extent. The first Book of Maccabees originated not far from one hundred years before Christ. Our Greek translations of Judith and Siracides cannot be much older than this, though the originals probably go back nearly a century further.[3] A still later writing also containing the word ἐκκλησία in the genuine sense of the canonical Septuagint, is the Psalter of Solomon, which irrefragable internal evidence brings within the last half century preceding the birth

[1] Robertson Smith, op. cit., 96, notices another reason, viz. that the law was so much more frequently and studiously translated for synagogue-services than any other parts of the O. T.

[2] Including, with Tischendorf, Sirac. xxx. 27, which, however, Fritzsche omits.

[3] On these dates, see Bleek, op. cit., 552, 554; Schultz, op. cit., 760, 761; Smith's Bib. Dic., ii. 17, 18, and Praef. to Fritzsche, Lib. Apoc. V. T.

Digitized by Google

of Christ.[1] The same *usus loquendi* greets us in Josephus; and also, in at least one case, in Philo; although sometimes, touching his employment of this word, as so often elsewhere, one is at a loss to know whether the Alexandrian elder is thinking more of Moses or of Plato.[2] When, in addition to all this, we remember that the New Testament has the word ἐκκλησία in several places where it must mean the Old Testament קהל, and this without notifying us of any peculiarity in such a use of it, the evidence will not let us doubt that ἐκκλησία and קהל were well-recognized correlatives in our Lord's day.

This tedious circumlocution may seem to have carried us only a little way; but it will soon be seen that it has not been useless. Our propaedeutics concerning words has put us in condition to study Christ's conception of the church that he will build, and has taught us to look for the original of that conception not in classic, but in Old Testament thought. Christ speaks to Peter of a קהל. He does not explain or modify his word in the slightest. He must therefore wish Peter to construe his statement, as Peter certainly will, in the light of the most common notion which קהל, in virtue of its history and use, is qualified to evoke. The additional particular that it is to be a קהל against which "the gates of hell shall not prevail," will, in like manner, occasion Peter to interpret by the most dignified notion which the word suggests. So Peter's thought flies instantly to the קהל of the theocracy, the solemn congregation of ancient Israel, as the auxiliary conception whereby he may understand the Master's prophecy.

[1] See preceding note on this Psalter.

[2] Philo, De Abrahamo, Mangey, ii. 4; Quis rer. div. haeres, Mang. i. 509. (See Acts vii. 38), cf. Quod omn. prob. lib. Hoeschel's ed. 670, and De Josepho, Hoesch., 422. The word occurs thirty-six times in Josephus. In every case (exc. perh. Antiq. iv., 3. 1) he is so studious to impart a classic turn to the phrase wherein it is set, that the word seems to exclude *personnel* from its connotation (see later in this Article, on distinction between the Classic and the O. T. sense of ἐκκλησία). Yet his uniform adoption of ἐκκλησία through the early part of the Antiq. at points where קהל occurs in O. T., justifies the statement in the text.

Digitized by Google

A קהל in the Old Testament is, primarily, a body of people assembled, or wont to assemble, with purpose, and made into a unit by some organic tie. The *personnel*, the unity, and the telic character of the unifying bond — these are the chief marks which the conception connotes; and though one is made specially prominent now, and now another, all are present, as Vitringa has made apparent, wherever the conception is found.[1] In its prevailing use, however, the notion is far more specific; and קהל becomes the Israelitish *civitas*, the Jewish nation viewed as a politico-religious body. Thus, from the beginning of Exodus to the end of the Old Testament, we read on almost every page something concerning the קהל or "congregation" of the covenant people. For instance, the Book of Exodus has it that the whole קהל of Israel is yearly to kill the paschal lamb[2]; Leviticus, that the קהל must sacrifice the bullock whenever a sin-offering is called for[3]; Numbers, that, on the sounding of the two silver trumpets together, the great קהל shall forthwith assemble at the tabernacle door.[4] Deuteronomy recites that such and such persons belong to the קהל, those of a different character being excluded from the same.[5] Joshua reads the commands of Moses before all the קהל of Israel.[6] The whole קהל, from Dan to Beersheba, gather to fight against the tribe of Benjamin on account of the crime done to the Levite at Gibeah. David speaks and sings in the great קהל. Solomon brings together the whole קהל of Israel at the dedication of his temple. And so on.

After the conquest of Canaan was complete, so difficult was it for the whole people to assemble, that the outlying tribes were usually represented in the great meetings at Jerusalem by delegations of elders. Yet such an assemblage was called a קהל, even the קהל of Israel, it being viewed as standing for, in an ideal way containing, all the people. Just so, in the Benjamite war under the judges, the allied tribes were none the less the "קהל of the people of God" though Ben-

[1] Vitringa, op. cit., 79 sq.; cf. Girdlestone, O. T. Synonymes, 362 sq.
[2] xii. 6. [3] iv. 13 sq. [4] x. 7. [5] xxiii. [6] viii. 35.

Digitized by Google

jamin was wanting.[1] Hence we may see why Judah still claims to be the continuation of the true national קהל even after the northern tribes have seceded. In one instance, to be sure, as the author of Second Chronicles certifies, the קהל of Judah had the pleasure of welcoming a representation from the apostate tribes; but this was upon a special occasion, and the manner in which it is mentioned indicates that it was not a regular occurrence. Jeroboam and his followers also had their קהל, and, although no passage quite proves this, it seems that the northern kingdon too, in virtue of its numbers, professed to be the later self of the old, fully national קהל. But we are concerned now with the South. We must suppose that, in proportion as religion and the national spirit drooped in Judah, fewer and fewer people or delegates from the country would appear in Jerusalem even at the most important religious festivals; yet the קהל is thought and said to be present in these as before. The result is that the citizens of Jerusalem alone at length come to be spoken of as a קהל, and also as the קהל of Israel, since they represent this. A step more, and every Jewish town has its קהל, but it is still the קהל of Israel, inasmuch as it is a miniature of that greater whole. Jeremiah styles as a קהל the Jews of Pathros in Egypt.[2] Ezekiel twice applies the term to the populace of Tyre, indicating, as he is speaking to Israel, that this *usus loquendi* is familiar to Jewish ears.[3] The restored Israel of Ezra's day are but a small portion of all the circumcised; yet they not only constitute a קהל, but assume in that character all the privileges and duties pertaining to the corporate people of God under David and Solomon.

After this, Israel's centre and capital was Jerusalem. The temple was there, and neither the temple nor its services could be duplicated.[4] But if Jerusalem was *the* centre of

[1] Judg. xx. 2.

[2] xliv. 15. It appears, to be sure, not to have been a city, but it was a limited district.

[3] xxvii. 27, 34.

[4] Josephus, Antiq. xiii. 2. 3; cont. Apion ii. 22. As to the Temple of Onias in Egypt, Bel. Jud. vii. 10. 2, 3.

Digitized by Google

the now ecumenical Israel, each town containing a synagogue was just as truly *a* centre. The restoration from Babylon, the erection of the temple, and the pompous new beginning of that dear, long-suspended liturgy — these nowise so much mark a revival of religious life as they result from one already vigorous and old. The Israelites that did not return to Jerusalem were nevertheless Israelites, no jot the less persuaded that they possessed a divine religion; and when, one after another, these scattered communities emerge into historic light, we find them as ardently in love with the Hebrew name, religion, Scriptures, traditions, and hopes as their brethren dwelling under the very shadow of the temple. Except sacrificing, every act of worship called for by their religion they can, and do, perform either in their synagogues or at their homes. They sacrifice too, though not directly; for, from every synagogue, though as distant as the earth's end, a generous tale of gold goes periodically to Jerusalem as subsidy for the expensive temple service there. Israel was never before, at least since Moses, so truly one as between Ezra and Christ. Blown to atoms, the nation found its unity.

Now each of these widely scattered little *nuclei* of Judaism was a קהל. Further, each was *the* קהל (representing the great Israel) in the same sense, though not to the same full extent, that the קהל of Jerusalem was. As has been intimated above under *ἐκκλησία*, wherever it occurs in the Greek Apocrypha we are authorized to read קהל in the originals, because, within the canon, this Greek renders this Hebrew word, or a synonymous derivative of it, in every single case of its use, seventy-eight times in all. Had we the originals, therefore, we should read in 1 Maccabees of the קהל of Jerusalem, and in Judith of the קהל of Bethulia. Likewise in Siracides we should often encounter the word in precisely the same sense, no town or city being specified. Wisdom "shall exalt him [the good man] above his neighbors, and in the midst of the קהל shall she open his mouth."[1] "The mouth [speech] of a discreet man shall be sought for in the קהל, and they will ponder his

[1] Sir. xv. 5; cf. Ps. xxii. 22.

Digitized by Google

words in their heart." (The adulteress) "shall be led forth into the קהל [for judgment[1]], and careful watch be kept upon her children." These are the first three passages wherein Siracides uses the word ἐκκλησία, and it is plain in each case that the Jewish local assembly affords that aspect of the thought which is first to present itself to the mind through the word.

Quite as evident is it, on the other hand, that even in these cases the thought is more than local. Siracides entertains the same thought of קהל that we meet with in the Psalter. Both conceive it as, in its most obtrusive sense, local, yet also with more or less distinctness in different instances, as including the element of being representative. This representative character of the local קהל is often made perfectly explicit in the Apocrypha. In Judith, the קהל of Bethulia counsel for "the race" of Israel, praying to "the God of Israel," and beseeching him to "look upon the face of the sanctified ones."[2] Siracides speaks of the "קהל of the Most High" in a way to indicate that this was thought an appropriate epithet for any קהל.[3] The author of 1 Maccabees, besides referring familiarly to "the קהל" of Moses' time as a thing still extant and well known, mentions as "the קהל of Israel" that company which aided Judas Maccabeus in purifying the temple,[4] although in the then state of Palestine, this company can neither, on the one hand, have embraced all the people, nor, on the other, have been in any part composed of delegates.

"On this rock will I build my קהל" says Christ. That is, our blessed Lord seizes upon this great and, to Peter, most vivid Jewish conception as a rough and general, but very expressive analogue of the church which he will found. "I too, like Moses and David, am to have a קהל, only mine shall

[1] Reference seems to be had here, to the procedure of the local Sanhedrim as a court. The Jews at the time of Christ, in all towns where they dwelt in numbers, constituted a judicial and civil body by themselves, sometimes exercising great authority. See Josephus, Antiq. xiv. 12; xix. 4; Bel. Jud. ii. 12; Vitringa, 559 sq.; Acts xviii. 15.

[2] vi. 16 sq. [3] xxiv. 2, cf. xv. 5. [4] iv. 59, cf. xiv. 19.

Digitized by Google

be the antitype of theirs, worldwide in sweep and sway, proof against the might and venom of hell." His church is to be a new קהל, animated, indeed, by a different and higher soul, which shall give to it, as it develops, a character and career thoroughly its own; more spiritual than the old, exalting the individual more, less brave and imposing in ritual and in organization of an external kind as well as less dependent on these; nevertheless a קהל in the sense of an ecumenical religious *civitas*, — *nuclei* everywhere, an absolute earthly centre nowhere, — yet a veritable unit, made so by the ties of holy purpose and of faith in Christ. Something like this, it would seem, must have been Christ's thought in the text with which we started.

Christ's thought of church in one passage finds, therefore, all needful explanation and grounding in the corresponding Old Testament conception of קהל. We are now prepared to go further, and to show, as against writers like Renan, Farrar, Ferrière, and Hatch,[1] that it is the same with every New Testament phase of the ἐκκλησία notion. Even Paul's churches are to be understood, — origin, composition, and meaning, — from the point of view of Jewish history, not at all from any classic or heathen use of the term ἐκκλησία, as these learned critics represent. Etymologically ἐκκλησία signifies the act of "calling forth." This exact sense is quite possibly the one in which the word was earliest used, to describe the act of the herald summoning, e.g. the Athenian Demus to the Agora or the Pnyx.[2] Then, by a natural metonymy, it shifted its meaning from action to result of action, and took on the sense of assembly. This is the

[1] Renan, Les Apôtres, 352 sq.; Farrar, The Life and Works of St. Paul, i. 22; Ferrière, Les Apôtres, 98 sq.; Hatch, The Organization of the Early Christian Churches, 26 sq.; cf. Stanley, Christian Institutions, 45, and Heinrici, Zeitschrifte für wissenschaftliche Theologie, 1876, pp. 465–526; 1877, pp. 89–130, Studien u. Kritiken, 1881, pp. 505 sq. Farrar only suggests the view we combat, and Heinrici in his last article, p. 506, denies intention to contradict the view which derives church from synagogue. But he will have it that many peculiarities and minor institutions of the Pauline churches originated from analogous things in heathen municipalities, clubs, guilds, etc.

[2] Hermann, Pol. Antiq. of Greece, 252 sq.

Digitized by Google

generic sense of the word, one in which Herodotus uses it,[1] and which from his time on it probably never lost. Yet almost everywhere in the classics ἐκκλησία bears a more specific meaning than this. It is a political assembly of some town or city. The Attic classics, especially those hailing from the age of Pericles, almost invariably make ἐκκλησία the name of the Athenian political assembly. Thucydides and Xenophon,[2] indeed, speak of the ἐκκλησία of an army, using the word in its generic sense, or perhaps having dimly before the mind the figure of the Athenian or other deliberative assembly; as later Lucian evidently has in his so frequent reports of ἐκκλησίαι among the gods.[3]

Now, from the relation in generic meanings, partly also in etymology, between ἐκκλησία and קהל,—the root of each signifying "to call,"—it could easily appear as if the two conceptions must be convertible, if not identical. But it is not so. True enough, the Seventy could not have adopted a more suitable Greek word than ἐκκλησία for the rendering of קהל; yet the classical Greek thought of ἐκκλησία is a very different one from the Old Testament thought of קהל. The difference is this, that קהל renders prominent the *personnel* assembling; ἐκκλησία, the state of being assembled. קהל is a company of persons; ἐκκλησία is a special condition in which certain persons are, relatively to space and to one another. The people constituting a קהל are a קהל also when dispersed; an ἐκκλησία is such only to the moment of adjournment. Again, classical writers rarely or never speak of an ἐκκλησία as taking any action; the formula always being, "the people in ἐκκλησία."[4] But no mode of speech is more current in the Old Testament than to predicate action of the קהל directly. Still further, the classics quite often make the expression ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ, "in assembly," mean, purely and simply, "assembled"; particularly emphasizing

[1] iii. 142.

[2] Xen. Anab. i. 3. 3; Thucyd. viii. 81; cf. Polybius, ii. 27. 5.

[3] ἐκκλησία θεῶν, 1; Ζεὺς τραγῳδός, 12 and 14; Νέκρικοι διάλογοι 10 and 12; also often elsewhere.

[4] See Demosthenes De Corona, passim.

Digitized by Google

condition, and excluding *personnel* as far as possible from the thought. קהל serves in no such phrase. The Old Testament does not contain the unmodified expression בקהל, "in assembly." We always read "in *the* assembly," or "in assembly *of*" such and such persons, or "in *the* assembly *of*" such and such,—turns of diction which command chief attention to the *materiel*, the persons composing the assembly, and withdraw it from their mutual relation in space.

Now what these theorists forget is, that ἐκκλησία in the New Testament thoroughly agrees with this peculiar connotation of קהל, which it has inherited. Hence, although with the same orthography, it is really an altogether different word from the heathen ἐκκλησία. The Christian idea hails from the Septuagint, from Jewish ecclesiastical institutions; it cannot possibly have found its way into New Testament documents and polity out of heathen life. The Christian term means a body of people; the heathen, a session of a body of people. So far, at least, as the Lord's own conception is concerned, we may be sure, from what we have already seen, that, being ecumenical, it has no classic analogue, and also that he set it in a sentence such as no classic writer would have framed. View ἐκκλησία as heir to the wealth of meaning in the old theocratic word קהל, and no utterance could be more natural, as none could be more majestic, than that put by Matthew upon Christ's lips: "On this rock will I build my ἐκκλησία"; yet to Lysias or Demosthenes those words could hardly have conveyed any sensible meaning. But Paul's thought of ἐκκλησία exactly chimes with Christ's, save that it only rarely reaches out to an ecumenical breadth. Farrar and Hatch's argument from Paul's use of ἐκκλησία as a heathen term then current, is therefore estopped. Paul's word is heathen in orthography only. Hatch ought to have noticed that even in the inscriptions which he cites[1] ἐκκλησία denotes, as in Acts xix., nothing but the session, not the people. These heathen associations do not constitute, but hold, ἐκκλησίαι. Even their meeting is most often an ἀγορά,

[1] Corp. Inscr. Graec. 2271, Le Basel Waddington, viii. 1381, 1382. See also Corp. Inscr. Atticarum, i. 55, line 12; 57, lines 16 and 17.

Digitized by Google

rather than an ἐκκλησία; while σύνοδος and θίασος come far nearer than ἐκκλησία to denoting their *personnel.*

Other alleged resemblances of the Pauline churches to contemporary heathen organizations equally shrink from scrutiny.[1] These organizations style their regulations νόμοι, their votes ψηφίσματα, their rulers ἄρχοντες and ἐπιμεληταί[2] — idioms foreign to all New Testament accounts of churches. Ἐπίσκοπος, indeed, they use with Paul; but to make him learn this word from them, considering its currency in the Septuagint, smacks strongly of special pleading. Even the democracy of these clubs by no means presents a perfect parallel to that of Paul's churches.

Nor do the more general premises appealed to by this class of writers really favor their view. Some Jews must have been settled in Greek-speaking lands before the time of Alexander. Soon after his conquest the Hellenistic Jews became almost as numerous as the others. In Alexandria especially these were well acquainted with the classics. Philo was mightier in classic Greek than in classic Hebrew;[3] and several of the Apocrypha exhibit a purer Greek than any considerable passage of the New Testament.[4] More than this, so early as Christ's time at least, the special Attic use of ἐκκλησία had come to prevail wherever Greek was heard. Like that of Ephesus in the Acts, every Hellenic or Hellenistic populace on earth came together in its ἐκκλησία. Trade-guilds, clubs, and literary associations used the same word to name their sessions. Paul could not, therefore, but have been aware of this heathen sense. He even uses the word himself four times in this very signification.[5] That his word for church is ἐκκλησία not in this heathen, but in its old Jewish signification, ought to be conclusive.[6]

[1] See Foucart, Des Associations Religieuses chez les Grecs, pp. 12, 15, 16.

[2] But the Therapeutae of pseudo-Philo had ἐπιμεληταί, De Vita Contemplativa, ad fin.

[3] See a note by Vigerus in Eusebius, Praep. Ev. ii. 22.

[4] i. and ii. Macc., Siracides, and Sophia Solomonis.

[5] 1 Cor. xi. 18; cf. vs. 20; xiv. 19, 28, 35; cf. vs. 23, and Acts xix. 32, 39, 41.

[6] All the foregoing was necessary to valid judgment upon a question which, had that been possible, should have been settled at the outset, viz. whether the

Digitized by Google

Starting out still again from Christ's mighty utterance to Peter, we will next notice that the macrocosmic sense in which that passage takes ἐκκλησία is the radical New Testament sense of the word, the source and interpreter of all the other senses. Very many able authors, including those named a moment ago, have, in our opinion, expounded the New Testament upon this point in a manner exactly the reverse of correct. They have judged the local sense of ἐκκλησία to be the basal one, the point of departure in construing all ideas of church, viewing the ecumenical sense as deducible from this by a process of ordinary generalization.[1] This is another phase of the effort, now in the height of fashion, to explain the New Testament churches, at least those planted by the apostle Paul, as, at first, essentially of a piece with the various kinds of heathen *symposia*. That it is a mistaken view appears in many ways. We have seen that the Jewish conception of קהל was never purely local, and that the local phasis of the thought was in every case subordinate to that ecumenical phasis which gave it birth; and from these facts in connection with another, the proof of which is only too abundant, viz. the intimacy wherewith New Testament church polity was

very conception of church did not first originate after Christ was dead. Farrar alleges that Paul's epistles "furnish the earliest instances" of naming "the Church of Christ's elect" an ἐκκλησία. This seems to imply Farrar's adoption of a view entertained by many, that the idea having had no place in the original evangelical narratives, stole into our Matthew in its present form, out of the Pauline thought, under cover of a term first christianized by Paul. If we have argued well above, this is a most improbable theory. The קהל-conception has been shown to have been an every-day one when Christ was on earth, as familiar as possible to the minds of all. Further, all critics must admit an intention on the Lord's part that his followers should constitute a society or brotherhood of some sort. His doctrine of the kingdom of God shows this, for the kingdom was to remain no mere idea, but to push itself into manifestation. The notion of קהל, then so common, advancing only a little upon Christ's thought of the kingdom, it is incredible that they should not sometimes have fallen together in Christ's thought and speech. This will become more and more clear as we proceed. Read Immer's Theol. des N. T., sec. 139 f., and Weiss, Lehrb. der biblischen Theol. des N. T., sec. 99 f., 3 Aufl.

[1] Bacon, Genesis of the New England Churches, 26. "Particular churches in that age (the apostolic) were related to each other as *constituent portions* of the universal church."

Digitized by Google

joined on to Old Testament synagogue polity, one would perforce expect the primacy of the ecumenical notion in the old order of things to manifest itself also in the new. The church polity of our first century does not present itself as a fresh creation, but rather as a continuation of a *regime* already there, simply modified to fit the needs of the new spiritual life and purposes. If any reader does not feel the truth and significance of this statement, it is only because there is no time or space here to survey the evidence therefor. Simply on account of such lack we will not rely for argument upon this pre-Christian analogy. Nor need we. New Testament grounds alone are entirely sufficient to prove that the larger sense of ἐκκλησία is the root or trunk of which the local sense is but an outgrowth. Local churches are points of consciousness and of activity for the great, all-inclusive ecclesiastical unit, not themselves the units for an ecclesiastical aggregate. They are faces, rather than parts, of the one church.

Were the latter the scriptural view, assigning primacy to the individual congregation, some difficulty would assuredly arise in explaining why the New Testament uses ἐκκλησία in the broad sense at all, because it is as easy to say "churches" as "church," and the plural diction would have excluded all possible ambiguity. But this general sense, while not so common in the New Testament as the other, is still very common. Fifteen times, at least, does it salute us there, apart from the passages where ἐκκλησία means the Old Testament קהל.[1] Christ uses the word ecumenically at a time when there are as yet no local churches whence to generalize; and to explain that he does this by way of prolepsis is at least very awkward. How easily he could have prophesied of founding "churches"! He will found a "church." The unity of the institution appears to have a prominent place in his conception.

We will not, however, dwell upon such inconclusive notices,

[1] Heinrici, Stud. u. Krit., 81, S. 512, says that Paul "names and knows in his four chief Epistles only ἐκκλησίαι, particular churches, existing side by side." If Heinrici means that this is the only sense in which these great letters use the word, it is violence to at least 1 Cor. x. 32; xi. 22; xii. 28.

Digitized by Google

but look for some which have deeper significance. The New Testament often applies ἐκκλησία in what might well be styled an "ecumenical-local" sense, to which no commentator or writer upon church polity seems to have attended. Thus, up to its dispersion on Stephen's death, the church at Jerusalem is spoken of in Acts simply as "the church," though there must have been many believers, if not congregations, elsewhere. Later, when necessary, an adventitious localizing phrase is added, and we read ἡ ἐκκλησία ἡ ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις, which, as the metropolitan character then accorded to this church proves, must be translated, "the church as far as it existed in Jerusalem." So Paul thrice speaks of "persecuting the church," notwithstanding he had persecuted only in Jerusalem. Gal. i. 22 recites that the other Christian churches in Judea knew him only by report.[1] Acts ix. 31 speaks of "the church καθ' ὅλης τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ Γαλιλαίας καὶ Σαμαρίας," i.e. the church "so far as represented" in those provinces; and this referring to a time when,[2] as Galatians i. 22 announces, there were local churches in Judea at least. Acts xi. 1 records that Herod "stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church." Now, while the church in Jerusalem was, so far as we know, the sole field of the king's attack, the account concerns itself entirely with apostles — showing that, provided the historian thinks of the Jerusalem church as local at all, he conceives it merely as a local manifestation of a greater fact or institution which is not local. In Acts xx. Paul enjoins upon the elders of the Ephesian local church to "tend the church of the Lord which he purchased through his own blood." Surely here too the idea of church transcends local limits; unless we ought rather to say that the apostle recognizes no local limits to be transcended, but views the single church as a point of manifestation for the great ecclesiastical totality. The Corinthian church in its first Epistle, x. 23, is bidden

[1] The next verse shows that these outlying churches existed before Paul's conversion.

[2] I.e. Paul's first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion.

Digitized by Google

"give no offence" "to the church of God"; not that the ill effects of sinful conduct there will spread to other churches, but that spiritual injury to it is injury to the church of God directly. The ejaculation at xi. 22, "or do ye despise the church of God?" is to be explained in the same way; and each Epistle has an address, *ἡ ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ ἐν Κορίνθῳ*, which suggests the translation, "the church of God so far as present in Corinth." It must be that the writers of these notices view the church not as a discontinuous whole, but as continuous. They assign it plurality, indeed, in a way; but its unity is deeper and dominant. It is one diamond with many facets; it is not a *compositum*, but a *totum*. The New Testament doctrine of church is through and through realistic in the Platonic-mediaeval sense. The church is the *prius* of all local churches.

It will at once illustrate and substantiate this view of the local church as but a microcosm, a specialized manifestation of the ecumenical body, to note that this specializing does not end here, but gives rise also to a sub-local sense of the word *ἐκκλησία*, denoting a church within a local church. Cases of this kind had place at Ephesus, Rome, Laodicea, and Colossae; and probably the *οἶκοι* in Jerusalem where the solemn bread-breaking occurred, likewise contained churches of this sub-local variety. The church, e.g. in the house of Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus,[1] is by no means a second church of Ephesus parallel with *the* church of Ephesus, and independent of the same. Nor is it, on the other hand, a mere "meeting" with ever shifting *personnel*. The constituency of each of these sub-local churches is as definite and permanent as it is in the case of any local church. Otherwise they could not send and receive salutations. Now in each of the four instances the formula is, *ἡ κατ' οἶκόν τινος ἐκκλησία*, "the church according to"[2] some one's

[1] 1 Cor. xvi. 19. A year later than the writing of this, there is but one church in Ephesus, although Christians were increasing, Acts xx. 17. The church was still single when Revelation was written, ii. 1. The same relation of the sub-local to the local church can be proved just as easily in the other cases.

[2] Cf. Acts ix. 31, and Winer's Grammar, s.v. *κατά*.

Digitized by Google

house; the one church so far as it comes to manifestation there.

This mention of the church sub-local provokes another observation which will be pertinent here: that, while *the ἐκκλησία* is one of the most definite conceptions which the New Testament contains, the local *ἐκκλησία* is one of the most indefinite. *The ἐκκλησία* is the whole company of believers in Christ on earth at any given time. It is spiritual like the kingdom of God. Indeed, the two conceptions to a considerable extent cover one another. Yet there are marked differences. Exact definitions at this precise point are difficult, and the best attainable ones are liable to be somewhat arbitrary; but the general representations of the New Testament are about as follows: The church began with Christ; the kingdom of God existed earlier. The church is confined to believers in the historic Christ; the kingdom includes all God's children. The church belongs, the kingdom not, wholly to this world.[1] The church is visible. It shows itself to the world obtrusively, like a city which "cannot be hid." It forces the world to notice it, for it attacks and conquers the world. The New Testament knows absolutely nothing of an "invisible church."[2] Once more, the church has a quasi-organic character which the kingdom lacks. In fact, in one sense, it is veritably an organic body, faith in Christ unifying it and furnishing it with norm and guidance for its development, just as is done for an animal by the life-principle within it. But even in the general sphere and direction of visible organization, the church goes beyond the kingdom, since it everywhere leads out into local churches

[1] Eph. v. 27, the only scripture which seems antagonistic to this statement we regard figurative. Heb. xii. 23 presents no difficulty. See Delitzsch, ad loc. Eph. iii. 21 does not assert that the offerers of the eternal praise will persist in their character of *ἐκκλησία*.

[2] Krauss, Das Dogma von der unsichtbaren Kirche, 132, 136. On the general subject, cf. Immer, Theol. des N.T., 139 ff.; Schmid, N. T. Theol., 250 sq.; Dorner (a review of Krauss), Jahrb. für d. Theologie, 520 ff. "Invisible church," if we will retain the sometimes convenient conception, can only connote the invisible attributes, processes, life, etc. of "the church."

Digitized by Google

which are *visibly* organic, and everywhere makes prominent God's revealed word and the Christian ordinances.

Of the local church, as the microscopist sometimes expresses himself when an object is beneath his glass, the "definition" is poor. One can, of course, say that it is, in general, the Christian believers within a certain town or city. But even such a statement we should have to take with allowances. The notices in our documents produce the impression that New Testament local churches had no precise enrolled *personnel*, as churches have now; that, concerning a Christian residing, e.g. midway between Corinth and Cenchrea, the question whether he belonged to the church of the one city or to that of the other, would then never be raised; and that there were many Christians then who never thought of themselves as members in this local church rather than that, even if in any at all.[1] The eunuch is baptized into no local church. The Christians at Damascus are still members of the synagogue when Paul arrives. So those at Ephesus even later.[2] Both Epistles to Corinth are so addressed as to include the church at Cenchrea, yet no reference to this church as such appears in either. Unless James, in Acts xxi., uses unwarrantable hyperbole, the Jerusalem church must then have been too unwieldy for worship in common;[3] so that, there at least, one mark of a local church commonly thought indispensable,[4] viz. that its secular worship must be in mass-meetings and not in conventicles, certainly became wanting very early. This mark must have failed other local churches long before the set of the apostles' day.

Already we detect that in conceiving the church as in one sense single, in another, plural, the thought of New Testament writers does not begin with plurality and pass thence to unity by abstraction and generalization, but moves from

[1] Hatch, op. cit., 29. 30 proves this. See his references, especially Heb. x. 25; Jude 19. There were Plymouth Brethren so early.

[2] Acts xviii. 26. Aquila and Priscilla make acquaintance with Apollos first in synagogue.

[3] So Gunkel, in Siona, Feb. 1881, S. 20.

[4] Dexter, Congregational Handbook, p. 64.

Digitized by Google

unity of essence to plurality in concrete manifestation. Unity is first and highest. All the exalted and dignifying things said of Christ's earthly kingdom are connected with the church instead of with churches. "The church" shall bear up against the powers of hell. It is "the church" that is the "supplement" or "filling-out" of that divine Head of the church "who filleth all in all." "The church" is to make known "to the principalities and powers in heavenly places" "the manifold wisdom of God." Unto God shall be given "glory in the church and in Jesus Christ to all the generations of the age of the ages." It is "the church" that is compared with the festal throng of myriad angels, and declared composed of God's firstborn; and "the church" that Christ shall so sanctify by the word as to "present it to himself glorious, blameless, and holy, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing."[1]

The church is a family or household. So it is a temple, of which Christ is the corner-stone. It is also the body whereof he is head. What a favorite with Paul this last resemblance is, one need only read the Epistle to the Ephesians to see. It is, of course, unsafe to trust very much the probative force of tropes; but one cannot well count it meaningless that each of these figures rushes our thought from individual believers to church universal, neither of them exposing the slightest niche for the local church to fill. Four important local churches, at Rome, Philippi,[2] Colossae, and Ephesus, are addressed by Paul in Epistles, without being named as churches at all; while in two of these Epistles the ecumenical conception of church is a leading subject of discussion. Outside the Pastoral Epistles Paul alludes to the officers of local churches but very few times, and then only in the most general and passing way.[3] Twice in such references he brings these officers into relation with the church at large, each time at the foot of a catalogue of general church functionaries

[1] Matt. xvi. 18; Eph. i. 22, 23; iii. 10, 21; v. 27; Heb. xii. 22, 23.

[2] True, the Christians at Philippi are *constructively* represented as a church, iv. 15.

[3] Cf. Huther on 1 Tim. iii. 2.

Digitized by Google

beginning with apostles,[1] and so in a way to prove that, if he is thinking of the local church at all, his thought passes to it through a process of narrowing inward and downward from the more inclusive form of the idea.[2]

It appears, then, that in Christ's ἐκκλησία as in the קהל which formed its pattern, the ecumenical aspect is primary and uppermost, the parent of all the others. Each קהל finds its weightiest formal characteristic in constituting an organic whole.[3] Descent from Abraham is the bond unifying the old, faith in Christ that which ties together the new. The old found outlets for a *quasi* political manifestation of itself in synagogues, the new finds the same in local churches.

If the foregoing arguments are valid, it has been established: 1. That the conception of ἐκκλησία in the New Testament was based upon the Old Testament conception of קהל, exactly answering to it in connotation and force. 2. That the New Testament conception ἐκκλησία and the classic conception ἐκκλησία have quite different connotations. 3. That it is therefore impossible to consider the New Testament thought to have been derived from the classical one in any way more direct than through the Septuagint. 4. That the New Testament churches, Pauline and all, take their form from Jewish, not from heathen, types. 5. That in the view of the New Testament the church (ecumenical) is the logical *prius* of the local church, instead of the reverse.

It may be proper to add a single remark: It has not been shown, nor, in our judgment, can it be shown, that Christ intended his church to be a *visibly* organic whole. The moral solidarity brought by faith is one thing, and that Christ exalted; the political solidarity brought by external organization is quite another thing, and that, except in its simplest and local forms, Christ unsparingly condemned. Such passages as Matt. xx. 25–27; xxiii. 8–10, seem to us wholly incom-

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 28; Eph. iv. 11.

[2] Doubtless ἐκκλησία in its local use quite early in the New Testament period took on about the meaning usually assigned to it now. Our account only aims to show the *natural history* of this local meaning.

[3] But not *visibly* organic, so far, at least, as the church is concerned.

Digitized by Google

patible with anything of the nature of a general or universal church organization. Faith in the one holy catholic church is not only right, but essential to a true apprehension of our Saviour's thought and plan; but it is no necessary, it is no legitimate, inference from it, that this ἐκκλησία, so unitary through faith in Christ, calls for unity in polity and government also. However, the New Testament teachings concerning church government do not fall within the purpose or the compass of this Article, and must be reserved for another.

ARTICLE III.

POSITIVISM AS A WORKING SYSTEM.

BY REV. F. H. JOHNSON, ANDOVER, MASS.

No. II.

"A sense of duty is inherent in the constitution of our nature, and cannot be escaped till we can escape from ourselves. It does not wait on any ontological conditions, and incur the risk of non-existence should no assurance be gained with regard to a being and a life beyond us. Even though we came out of nothing, and returned to nothing, we should be subject to the claim of righteousness so long as we are what we are. Morals have their own base, and are second to nothing. ..... Does it follow that because morals are indigenous they are therefore self-sufficing? By no means. Though religion is not their foundation, it is assuredly their crown."—*James Martineau.*

In a former article the religion offered by modern positivism was compared with the politico-ethical system of Confucius. In this comparison I endeavored to show that these systems offer striking points of resemblance; and further, that these points of resemblance, far from being confined to the surface, are the outcome of essential and fundamental agreements. It was not claimed that the two systems, or the conditions affecting them, are identical, but that they are so nearly alike that we are justified in affirming that the results which have flowed from the one are substantially the results which would flow from the adoption of the other.

Digitized by Google